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## **OLR Bill Analysis**

### **sSB 1104**

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOLS.***

##### **SUMMARY:**

This bill allows the education commissioner, starting in the 2011-12 school year, to waive state certification for teachers and administrators working at charter schools, if they meet certain qualifications. Starting with the 2012-13 school year, the bill limits the number of charter school teachers and administrators who may hold the waivers to no more than 15% of the school's teachers and 15% of its administrators.

Current law requires all teachers and administrators working in charter schools to hold either (1) the proper state certification for their positions or (2) a temporary 90-day or a temporary nonrenewable state certificate (see BACKGROUND). Under current law, at least half of those providing instruction or pupil services at a charter school must have the proper certification for the positions they hold, and no more than half may be working under the temporary certificates.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

##### **CERTIFICATION WAIVERS**

###### ***Waiver Qualifications***

The bill allows the education commissioner to waive state certification for a charter school teacher or administrator who:

1. either passes the state reading, writing, and math competency test for teacher certification candidates (currently Praxis I) or meets the State Board of Education's (SBE) criteria for a testing waiver;
2. passes the same state test as a teacher or administrator certification candidate seeking to work the same subject or administrative area (currently the appropriate Praxis II subject

test); and

3. demonstrates effectiveness as a teacher or school administrator, as appropriate.

### ***Waiver Renewals***

The bill allows the commissioner to reissue the certification waivers when the SBE renews the charter for the school where the teacher or administrator is employed. By law, most charters are renewable every five years.

### ***Administrator Supervision Authority***

The bill authorizes an administrator who holds a certification waiver issued by the education commissioner to supervise, and evaluate the performance of, anyone who teaches or provides other pupil services at the charter school where the administrator works, regardless of whether the person being supervised or evaluated is certified.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Temporary 90-Day Certificate***

By law, SBE may issue a temporary 90-day teaching certificate at the written request of an employing board of education or charter school to an applicant who successfully completes an SBE-approved alternative route to certification program and who:

1. holds a bachelor's degree from an accredited higher education institution, with a major in or closely related to the subject or certification endorsement area in which the person will be placed, or if the person will be working in a secondary subject or special endorsement area, has either the minimum number of semester hours required for that area or receives a waiver of the requirement after achieving an excellent score on the SBE-designated subject area test;
2. passes the state's required teacher competency and subject area tests;

3. has an undergraduate grade point average (GPA) or, if the person has at least 24 graduate credits a graduate GPA, of at least B; and
4. demonstrates appropriate experience working with children.

The commissioner can waive the last two requirements for good cause.

A person holding a 90-day temporary certificate must complete a special teacher education and mentoring program for such certificate holders. In addition, the employing board or charter school must attest that it has a special plan for supervising the person.

The state board may issue a temporary 90-day certificate in any of the following endorsement areas: elementary education, middle grades education, secondary academic subjects, special subjects or fields, special education, early childhood education, or administration and supervision (CGS § 10-145b(c)(1) & (2); Conn. Agency Regs., § 10-145d-414).

#### ***Nonrenewable Temporary Certificate***

SBE may issue a nonrenewable temporary teaching certificate, good for one year, to:

1. an applicant who lived in another state in the year before applying, is certified in that state, taught successfully for at least a year at a public or approved private school there, and meets all requirements for Connecticut certification except passage of the competency and subject tests;
2. an applicant who graduated from an out-of-state teacher preparation program and meets all requirements for Connecticut certification except the competency and subject tests; or
3. an applicant hired by a charter school after July 1 for a teaching position in the coming school year who can reasonably be

expected to meet the same requirements listed above for a temporary 90-day certificate by the beginning of the following school year (CGS § 10-145f(c)).

### ***Charter Schools***

A charter school is a nonsectarian public school organized as a nonprofit corporation and operated independently of a local or regional board of education. The SBE grants and renews the charters, usually for five years and, as part of the charter, may waive certain statutory requirements applicable to other public schools. A charter school may enroll students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 in accordance with its charter.

Charter schools are open to all students, including special education students, though they may limit the geographic areas from which students may attend. If a school has more applicants than spaces, it must admit students through a lottery.

### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Education Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea    27    Nay   5    (03/25/2011)